



Friends of the Louisiana Whooping Cranes

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
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Since You Last Read... An Update on the Louisiana Whooping Cranes

Hello and happy spring to everyone. This year is quickly passing us by and we have a lot of news to share with you.

We were excited to receive our 2015 cohort group of whooping cranes. The group of 11 juveniles (eight females, three males) arrived on December 3 and was released from the acclimation pen on December 29, 2015.

As for our 2011-2014 birds, in November we reported a population of 35 individuals. As reported above, we added a new cohort and have unfortunately lost a few birds since then, bringing the current Louisiana population to 42 birds.

Unfortunately, two cranes, L1-15 and 6-14, had to be euthanized due to illness and injury. L1-15, a juvenile who had a history of respiratory issues prior to her release in Louisiana, was found weak and unable to fly. Necropsy findings showed she tested positive for aspergillosis. L6-14 suffered severe leg injuries and was humanely euthanized.

As many of you have read, we suffered a tragic loss of two birds, who were shot in Jefferson County, Texas, on January 11, 2016. L1-14 and 14-14, a male and female, were lost in this senseless shooting. We are happy to report that a third male, L13-14, escaped without harm and has since returned to Louisiana. A suspect has been apprehended and is facing prosecution under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Originally the alleged suspect faced charges of a Class B misdemeanor under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Penalties, however, under the ESA could bring stiffer penalties than charges under the MBTA so we are hopeful that justice will be served for whooping cranes nationwide by allowing this incident to serve as an example that senseless shootings of whooping cranes will not be tolerated.



The trio of birds (L1-14, 13-14, and 14-14) pictured was taken in the days prior to the tragic shooting (L1-14 and 14-14) in Jefferson County, Texas. Local residents, including Paul Gregg who took this photo, had enjoyed observing and photographing the birds.

Photo by Paul Gregg

Since You Last Read Continued....

As the saying goes, to everything there is a season and the current season in Louisiana is nesting season. We are pleased to announce there are currently four active nests: Pairs L3-



2016 nest of L3-11 and 1-13 in a crawfish field in Allen Parish.

11 and 1-13 and 2 and 13-11 in Allen Parish, newly formed mates, L6-12 and 8-13 in Jeff Davis Parish and finally our pair that has nested the past two years, with non-viable eggs thus far, L7 and 8-11 in Avoyelles Parish. We are hoping that the third time (year) is the charm and that this determined pair will have the opportunity to hatch the first wild Louisiana whooping crane chick since 1939.

We continue to host the “visiting” whooping crane

(20-15) from the reintroduced eastern migratory population that was reported in the last newsletter. He remains in the Acadiana area as of the printing of this newsletter.

LDWF and Chevron have hosted three “Give A Whoop” workshops since the beginning of the year. Chimp Haven, located in Keithville, LA., graciously hosted 26 participants at the beginning of January. Two additional workshops consisting of Louisiana Master Naturalists and formal/informal educators were privileged to participate in a workshop at the LDWF White Lake property south of Gueydan at the end of January.

Participants of the Jan 16, “Give A Whoop” workshop hosted at Chimp Haven.



Robert “Bob” Love Retiring From LDWF

This month after 35 years of service, Robert “Bob” Love will be retiring from LDWF. Bob has been instrumental and responsible for helping to lay the foundation of bringing back whooping cranes to Louisiana. Bob has been involved in whooping crane project milestones, including securing approval for the reintroduction by proposing a funding model which had value-added components utilizing privately raised funds, leading efforts to define the entire boundary of Louisiana as a non-essential, experimental population status with the Department of Interior, and, relative to project funding, directing fundraising to gather resources, additional to state and federal dollars, making the project financially stable during its formative years. Those fund raising efforts have brought in \$1.5 million since 2011. Due to his involvement in the whooping crane project and other LDWF initiatives, the Louisiana Wildlife Federation awarded Bob with the 2014 Governor’s Award for Conservationist of the Year.

Bob began his career in 1981 as a wildlife specialist working with many game species, nuisance wildlife species, and species of special concern, including alligators. Career highlights also include purchasing more than 80,000 acres of conservation lands for Louisiana wildlife management areas and refuges. His most recent position as the Chief of the Coastal Nongame and Refuge Division included leading the Department’s biologist team involved with the reintroduction of the whooping cranes to Louisiana.

Bob has always had a vision for the whooping crane project... “Awareness leads to appreciation which leads to protection.” With that thought in mind, Bob, thank you for your genuine support and passion for not only the Louisiana whooping crane project, but for whooping cranes as a species. Your awareness of whooping cranes and their current status has certainly lead to many individuals’ appreciation for the species. You have certainly done your part in aiding in the continued restoration of the species and from all of us that have worked with you on this remarkable project... Thank you so much for your passion and please know that you will be missed!



The shadows may not be perfect for this picture, but what a perfect photo that shows two of the “founding fathers” of the LDWF whooping crane project; the late Tom Hess and Bob Love. Photo taken September 2009.

December 2015-February 2016 Friends of the Cranes

A special thanks to our monetary donors, without whom this project would not be possible. The following individuals have made donations to support the reintroduction of whooping cranes to southwest Louisiana:

ICF in honor of Sara Simmonds	Paul Dickson	Judith Gardner
Sherrie Roden in memory of Michael Hoke	Donald Crais	Dr. Gerald Burns
LA Ornithological Society	Wade Jones	Betty Founds
Terry Kohler	Linda Chance	Melissa Bonin
Drs. Sissy and Oliver Sartor	Judith O'Neale	Zachary Richard
Natalie Hunsicker	Janiece Mistich	Liz and Doug Sheer
Linda Chance	Rene Guas	Nicholas Thompson
Ann Lutz	Thomas Kane	James Taylor
Christine Paulsell	Michelle Pontiff	Elizabeth Powell
Vermilion Parish Retired Teachers Association		Jeff Cole

Approximately 1/3 of the Louisiana whooping crane project budget is comprised of private donations; all donations are sincerely appreciated. If you or someone you know would like to make a donation in support of the cranes, please contact Kell McInnis at 225-765-5100, kmcinnis@wlf.la.gov, or visit the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation's website directly at <http://lawff.org/>. Donations can also be mailed directly to the Foundation at P.O. Box 80378 Baton Rouge, LA 70898-0378.

Louisiana Whooping Crane Survival as of March 2016:

A total of 75 birds have been released in Louisiana since the project began in 2010. Out of those 75 birds, a total of 42 individuals are currently alive for a survivorship of 56%. Beginning with the 2011 cohort, birds received for the Louisiana project were younger in age compared to those received in the 2010 cohort. LDWF strongly believes that has helped increase the survival percentage of the individual cohorts. Reported below are the survival rates for the 2011-2015 cohorts:

<u>Cohort Year:</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
Current Survival:	10/16= 63%	9/14= 64%	6/10=60%	7/14=50%	10/11=91%

5 Year Average:

42/65=65%

This newsletter is compiled by Carrie Salyers, Education Outreach Coordinator for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries